

# SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONTROLLING VARIABLE OPTICAL ATTENUATORS

## Abstract of the Invention

System for adjusting a power level of an optical signal at an input to a component in a network element that forms part of an optical network. The system includes a variable optical attenuator (VOA) for receiving a first optical input signal and producing an attenuated optical output signal. A detector is coupled to the input of the component for detecting a power value of a second optical input signal that is derived from the attenuated optical output signal. A VOA controller (VOAC) includes logic for receiving the power value, via a signaling channel, and generating selected control parameters that are input to a control input of the VOA for accordingly adjusting a VOA attenuation factor to achieve a selected signal power level at the input to the component.